IN THE CLAIMS:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for providing communication service comprising the steps of:

    (a)   an intelligent peripheral receiving an alert message, from a database unit that received a request from a switch to perform a service for a call, which message specifies a communications protocol for <u>subsequent</u> communication between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral;

    (b)   with reference to a database within said intelligent peripheral, establishing a connection between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral to operate in accord with a protocol pointed to by said protocol parameter,

    (c)   communicating information between said database unit and said intelligent peripheral; and

    (d)   communicating information between [[a]] <u>said</u> switch and said intelligent peripheral over a bearer connection between them that is established for effecting said service, and associated with said call.

2 – 15. **(Canceled)**

16. **(Currently Amended)** A method for providing communication service comprising the steps of:

a switch receiving a call;

said switch sending information pertaining to said call to a control element;

based on said information, said control element identifying a service to be performed;

said control element sending to an intelligent ~~processor~~ <u>peripheral</u> an alert message specifying a protocol to be used in <u>subsequent</u> interactions between the intelligent ~~processor~~ <u>peripheral</u> and the database;

in response to said alert message, the intelligent ~~processor~~ <u>peripheral</u> selecting, from among a stored plurality of software modules, a software module for employing in implementing said interactions between the intelligent ~~processor~~ <u>peripheral</u> and the database according to the protocol specified in said alert message;

said control element sending to said switch a message informing said switch of a bearer connection set up between said switch and said intelligent ~~processor~~ <u>peripheral</u>;

setting up said bearer connection;

said ~~controller~~ <u>control element</u> sending a message, employing said protocol, to said intelligent peripheral, requesting that one or more tasks to be performed that make up said service;

said intelligent peripheral performing said one or more tasks, employing said bearer connection as necessary;

said intelligent peripheral informing said control element that the task was completed; and

dismantling said bearer connection.

17. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim **16** where said alert message is devoid of any request to perform any task pertaining to said call.

18. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim **16** where function of said alert message is solely to establish a protocol between said intelligent ~~processor~~ <u>peripheral</u> and said control element.

19. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim **16** where said protocol is the SR3511 protocol or an ITU-T protocol.

20. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim **16** where said bearer connection establishes a communication path from said intelligent ~~processor~~ <u>peripheral</u>, via said switch, to another party.

21. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim **16** where said step of said intelligent peripheral informing said control element that the task was completed is preceded by a step of said intelligent peripheral sending results of said one or more tasks to said control element.